THE Country's Concurrence WITH THE London United Ministers In their late HEADS of AGREEMENT: SHEWING The Nature and Advantages of a General Union among PROTESTANTS.

In Two Discourses,

Delivered before an Assembly of Ministers in the County of *Southampton.*

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BIBLIOTHECA BODLEIANA

TO THE READER.

THE *late* happy Union *between Two prevailing Parties among us, is a fit Subject of* Joy and Thankfulness: *That Differences, which have been managed with too much heat for so many Years, should now be so happily composed, and the* Contending Parties *should mutually condescend and concur together in* so fair an Agreement, *is a Bless-*

ſing we have reaſon gratefully to acknowledge; that the Country *ſhould ſo readily and unanimouſly agree with their Brethren in the* City *on the ſame Terms, and throughout the* whole Nation *there ſhould be ſuch a willing conſent to lay aſide thoſe* diſtinguiſhing Names *and Terms which have hitherto ſo miſerably divided us: Theſe things afford ſufficient matter for* praiſe, *to that God who rules the Hearts of Men, and ſtills the ragings of the People. I have long waited that ſome Abler Pen ſhould publickly expreſs the Countries Senſe of this great Mercy*; I ſaid, Days ſhould ſpeak, and Multitude of

of Years ſhould teach Wiſdom: But there is a Spirit in Man, and the inſpiration of the Almighty giveth them underſtanding, *Job* 32. 7, 8. *Being invited by my Brethren to Preach before them on this occaſion, I compoſed the following* Meditations, *and have now made them publick for more general uſe. I hope the* honeſty *of the Intention will attone for the weakneſs and unskilfulneſs of the Manager. I am willing to believe that* Irenicums *will now be more acceptable than they have hitherto been in this* wrangling, divided *Age, and the Sons of Peace will be no longer liable*

to Reproach and Scorn. O how happy would it be if this Union were more extensive, *and an end were put to that* Ceremonious War *that hath infested our Borders ever since the Reformation!* God seems by his Providences to make way for such a glorious work; *he hath not long since (by putting us in mind of our common danger,) inclined us to be more favourable one towards another: He hath by* surprizing Providences *exalted to the Throne a* Prince *of* known Piety and Moderation, *who hath placed such in the* Episcopal Chairs *as are Men Famous for their healing* truly Christian Spirits:

Spirits; *happy endeavours have been used for stopping that inundation of Wickedness and Prophaness, which hath so wofully overrun our Land. All these are happy preparations for a* general Union, *and blessed presages, that God hath yet Designs of Mercy towards us, and will not suffer our Enemies to prevail against us. Let us all therefore help on so* good a work *by our* Hearty Prayers, Holy Lives, *and endeared Love: Let us maintain an unity in Love and Affection, though we arrive not at* Uniformity in Rituals, *and the* Ceremonial *parts of Religion. In a word, to conclude all*

with the Expreſſions of excellent Biſhop Hall, *Let us be at* Peace *with our ſelves, and at War with none but Hell and* Rome.

That theſe Diſcourſes may be ſome way uſeful for the advancement of Love and Peace, *is the Hearty Earneſt* Prayer *of a Lover of* Peace *and Truth,*

Samuel Chandler.

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1 Theſ. 5. 13.

And be at Peace among your ſelves.

NOtwithſtanding the frequent commands of our Lord to Love and Unity, and the earneſt Calls and Perſuaſions of all his Apoſtles; yet how apt we are to forget and overlook them all, our unpeaceable Strifes and cenſorious uncharitable Contentions, are too ſad a Witneſs. Though our God be the God of Love, and our Saviour the Prince of Peace, and Love be the laſt Legacy and earneſt Requeſt of our dying Redeemer; yet he that beholds the bitter malice and envy, wrath

wrath and unchriſtian Jars of the Profeſſors of the ſame Faith, and Followers of the ſame Bleſſed Jeſus, muſt needs think it his great Duty to attempt the reviving that Love which is very much decayed, and that Charity which hath almoſt forſaken the Earth: When we ſee the Blood, and feel the Smart, and hear the Noiſes of Profeſſed Chriſtians, armed with Malice and Spite againſt each other, 'tis the duty of every Meſſenger of Peace to ſound a Retreat from this unnatural War, and perſuade the furious Combatants to ceaſe thoſe Strifes, and forbear thoſe hot Contentions which do ſo much diſhonour God, diſparage Religion, grieve our Friends, and make ſuch ridiculous ſport for our Enemies. That therefore I may endeavour to allay theſe unnatural heats and diſorders, I have choſen the Words read; and if St. *Paul* had

had any reaſon in thoſe early Ages of Chriſtianity, (when Love moſt flouriſhed, and Chriſtians were moſt peacefully united together,) to call upon them to be at Peace among themſelves; ſurely we have now far greater occaſion to do ſo, ſince Chriſtianity is broken into ſo many odious factions and by-names, and every little difference is apt to provoke our Anger, and cauſe our Paſſions to boyl up to too exceſſive heights. God hath indeed highly favoured us by his Providence, by now calming our Spirits, removing our Jealouſies and Miſ-underſtandings one of another, and reconciling thoſe Differences which have unhappily divided us many Years: So that now we can ſtrengthen one anohers Hands in the work of our Lord, and glory in the title of United Brethren: We are now come together ſolemnly to teſtify

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our Thankfulneſs to God for this happy Union, which many of us have long ſighed, and prayed, and waited, and laboured for in vain. Suffer me therefore to ſhew you the nature and excellencies of Peace, and direct my ſelf and you to thoſe Goſpel methods whereby our Happineſs may be continued and promoted; *Be at Peace among your ſelves.*

For the connexion of theſe Words, we need look back no further than *ver.* 12. where the Apoſtle having perſuaded the *Theſſalonians* to a due reſpect to their Miniſters and Spiritual Guides for their Works ſake, exhorts them here as a means to this, *to be at Peace among themſelves*; as if he ſhould have ſaid, unpeaceable diſorders will grieve your Miniſters hearts, detract from that juſt eſteem, which is due to their Office, and render their labours often uſe-

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leſs and unſucceſsful; therefore be at Peace among your ſelves.

The Words are plain and eaſie in themſelves, and need rather an hearty Meditation, and diligent improvement, than any laborious Explication.

The Obſervation I ſhall raiſe from the Words is this,

That it is the duty and ſhould be the practice of Chriſtian Churches to be at Peace among themſelves.

In handling whereof, I ſhall uſe this Method.

1. Explain the nature of Peace.
2. Shew the Advantages of Peace in Chriſtian Churches.
3. Add ſome Directions for the better maintaining and promoting it.

1. The nature of Peace.

1. Peace implies a command o-

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ver irregular Passions; ungovernable Lusts are the great
James 4. 1. Makebates and Dividers; he that hath not attained a Government over his Passions, is unprepared for Peace. Selfishness and Pride, Covetousness and Ambition, Envy and Malice and Revenge are the bitter Fruits that grow upon the stock of our Ill Natures, and are the sad occasion of all the disturbances in Church and State, and have rendered Christendom a Field of Blood. 'Till these Lusts are therefore subdued, and we have gained a victory within, outward Peace is impossible; he that cannot rule his own Spirit, will never long live at Peace with others. *An Angry Man will stir up Strife*, Prov. 29. 22. *Be ye* therefore *angry and Sin not*, Eph. 4. 26. Let not your Anger boyl up to any sinful Excesses.

2. Peace

2. Peace implies hearty Love; 'tis very hard and difficult long to maintain Peace with those we do not heartily love, and utterly impossible to keep it up with those we hate; Peace without Love is is no better than politick Dissembling, and Peace with Hatred an insidious cover of Enmity. Love is the only sure and lasting Bond of *Peace*, and Hatred the Fountain of Discord and Violence: If we would therefore forbear and forgive one another, and let the Peace of God rule in our Hearts, we must above all things put on Charity as a Rich Robe, our best Ornament, and the proper Livery of Christians. This is indeed the distinguishing badg of Christ's true Disciples, whereas the Disciples of the *Pharisees* were known by the broadness of their Phylacteries, and

Col. 3. 12, 13, 14. *John* 13. 36.

and enlarging the Borders of their Garments; and of *John* Baptist's, by their Leanness, contracted by Austerities, much Fasting and Abstinence: Christ would have him known by their undissembled Love, unfeigned Kindness, and obliging Condescensions for each others good.

3. Peace implies a diligent performance of all Offices of Justice and Humanity; we must *not love in word and Tongue only, but in deed and in truth*, 1 John 3. 18. Justice is the Guardian, and Humanity the Nurse of *Peace*; the only Sovereign Remedy to prevent Disorders, and put an end to Strife. Punctual observance of Contracts, truth in our Words, and sincerity in our *Promises*; injuring none in their Estates by fraudulent Incroachments, or in their good Names by slanderous Reports, is a great conserver of *Peace*, and keeps

keeps off those Contentions which otherwise will unavoidably arise. A tender Compassion to those in Want, and hearty readiness to advice and assist, relieve and comfort one another according to our particular Exigencies and Wants, is also very necessary in order to the advancing Peace among Brethren. *Gal.* 6. 10. *Heb.* 13. 15.

4. Peace implies courtesie and respectfulness; this is not only an argument of a generous Education and good Reading, but also a great ornament of Religion, and required of every Christian: Christ indeed came into the World to sweeten our Passions, calm our Natures, abate the sourness, and polish the roughness of our Humours. A sour Look, sullen Spirit, and scornful Carriage, is very unbecoming a Christian, is the *1 Pet.* 3. 8.

indication of a Mind averſe from Peace, and provokes diſdain in others: But on the contrary, reſpectful Geſtures, courteous Language, civil Salutations, and an affable Behaviour, are accompanied with ſuch winning Charms as few can reſiſt: And *when a Mans ways* thus *pleaſe the Lord*, they will pleaſe Men too, *and our very Enemies will be at Peace with us*, Prov. 16. 7.

5. Peace implies candid and favourable Opinions; raſh Cenſures, uncharitable Surmiſes, ſevere Reprehenſions, and unkind Miſconſtruction of our Neighbours Actions, tend mightily to provoke Wrath, and ſtir up Strife: whereas equity in our Cenſures, mildneſs in our Reproofs, putting the beſt Conſtruction upon, and making the moſt favourable interpretation of our Neighbours Carriage and Behaviour, is the ſureſt way to conciliate Peace and promote it.

Chriſtianity

Christianity indeed teacheth us to be very severe in observing our own Sins, but very favourable in reflecting on the Miscarriages of our Neighbours. Let others usurp God's Prerogative that they may do the Devils Work, turn Searchers of Hearts, that they may become Accusers of the Brethren. The true Christian hath so much to do at Home, that he hath very little leisure to look abroad; is so imployed in covering his own Deformities, that he hath not time to gaze on the nakedness of others; hides his Neighbours Faults with the Mantle of Love, and makes all possible allowances that the nature of the action will bear; will not conclude a Sin from an inevident sign, as *Eli* from *Hannah*'s Fervency concluded her Drunkenness. If our Neighbour be overtaken with a Fault, the Peaceable Christian will not from

one particular act conclude an Habit, nor call that a Mortal Plague, which may be only one of the Spots of God's Children: Nor will he pre-judge a Scandalous Sinners future State, but pity and pray for him, and seek to win him to Repentance.

Mat. 7. 1. *Rom.* 14. 4. *James* 3. 1.

6. Peace implies restraint of Pragmaticalness; if we would be quiet and at Peace, we must *mind our own Business*, 1 Thes. 4. 11. Those that impertinently meddle with things beyond their Sphere of Activity, are *disorderly Walkers*, 2 Thes. 3. 11. out of their proper rank and station, are *like him that taketh a Dog by the Ears*, Prov. 26. 17. may only irritate the anger of others, and cause them to turn upon them and bite them. He is therefore no Peaceable Minded Man, that *plays the Bishop in another Diocess*, 1 Pet. 4. 15.

2 Ge-

2 General.

The advantages of Peace in Chriſtian Churches.

1. This renders the Church moſt like to God; he is the God of *Peace*, the Father of Mercies, and not only full of Love, but *love it ſelf*, 1 *John* 4. 16. He is all that is good in the moſt eminent degree, but he is love in a more eſpecial and peculiar manner; though all his Attributes be infinite, yet his Love and Goodneſs is peculiarly Sovereign. The beſt deſcription we can frame of him in our Minds, or whereby we can repreſent him to others, is, that he is Omnipotent, Alwiſe, Immutable Goodneſs; under the old Teſtament, a diſpenſation of Terror, when the Riches of Divine Love were not diſplayed, yet even then he accounts his Goodneſs as his greateſt Glory, and the moſt charming Beauty of his Nature. *Exod.* 34. 6, 7.

And

And now what better way is there for his Church to
Eph. 5. 1. 2. be like him, than to be at Peace and abound in all mutual Offices of Kindneſs and Love?

2. Peace is the Churches greateſt Beauty and Ornament; 'twas this com-
Prov. 20. 3. *Pſal.* 133. 1. mended Chriſtianity of old; hence Chriſtians were called not *Chriſtiani*, but *Chreſtiani*, from a Greek Word ſignifying their benignity and ſweetneſs of Diſpoſition: And *See how the Chriſtians love one another* was a common Proverb in the Mouths of Heathens themſelves. What can be more glorious than to behold the moſt harmonious Union and Communion of Saints in the pleaſant ways of true Wiſdom and Goodneſs! Rage and Fury may be the excellencies of Beaſts, but Peace and Love is the ornament

ornament of Men. How calm is the Mind, how ſerene the Countenance, how chearful the Diſcourſe, how ſweet the Sleep, and how full of Content is the whole Life of the Peaceable Minded Man! *How lovely a melody in the Ears of God and Men, doth an Aſſembly of ſuch Chriſtians make when united together in acts of Religious Worſhip!* How much more pleaſant are the ſmooth and even ways of Peace, than the rugged Paths of Diſcord and Contention! Is it not much more delightful to behold the Heavens ſmiling upon us with a ſerene and chearful Countenance, than frowning with Clouds, or big with Storms and Thunder? Is it not much more ſweet to ſail in a quiet and calm Sea, than to be toſt about with a Tempeſt, and be continually in fear of every rolling unruly Wave; to hear Harmonious Sounds, than

grating

grating Janglings; and to dwell in a well Governed City, than in a wild and ſavage Wilderneſs? Peace is the way to the trueſt Pleaſure, and indeed is itſelf the greateſt Felicity: Hence the Angels in their holy Anthem, when they wiſhed the greateſt Happineſs to Men, knew not how better to expreſs their Senſe, than by ſaying, *On Earth Peace, Good Will to Men*, Luke 2. 14.

3. Peace is the Churches ſtrength; Peace is the ſinew of Society, as Mony is of War; the Cement that holds the parts together, and diſtinguiſhes the Congreſſes of Men from Herds of Beaſts, or which is as bad, the tumultuous Confuſions of the Rabble. Chriſtian Churches might be immortal, did they not kill themſelves by Diviſions; the deepeſt Wounds have been given to Chriſtianity in the Houſes of its pretended

Friends,

Friends, by Heresies and Schisms, rending and tearing the unity of the Body. He must be a great Stranger in the History of the Church, who knows not that it flourished while it walk'd in love, and injoyed Peace among its Children; but the adding to the Foundation the Wood and Hay, and Stubble of their own Inventions, and dividing thereupon, gave occasion to the rise of *Turk* and *Pope*, and all the dismal consequences thereof. Divisions stop'd the progress and cramp'd the growth of Christianity, and hath so of Reformed Christianity to this day: The most successful policy of our Enemies whereby they have done us the greatest mischief of all, hath been by fomenting, incouraging and cursedly improving our intestine Feuds: We have foolishly put Weapons into

Mat. 12. 26.
Gal. 5. 15.

their Hands, or rather been destroying our selves, while they have look'd on with Scorn and Laughter. Were we but peacefully united among our selves, we should quickly dishearten our Enemies, and laugh at all the attempts of *Rome* and *France* and Hell for our ruin and Destruction. Peace would be a mighty Bulwark to defend us, and would better prevent the Invasions of our Foes, than all our Wooden Walls on the Sea, or Fortresses and Castles by Land.

4. Peace tends to the comfort of the Church; there can be no comfortable communion of Saints, no bearing each others burdens, no communicating the experiences of the workings of Gods Spirit in one anothers Souls, of the answer of our several Prayers, and various methods of God's dealings with us in his different ways of Discipline and Comfort, so long as we

are at variance among our ſelves. When Souls groan under the burden of Sin and Guilt, never was Drink ſo welcom to the Thirſty Traveller, as the converſe of truly Spiritual Chriſtians to reſtore ſuch in the Spirit of Meekneſs, and ſpeak Peace unto them from the Scripture and their own Experience. But where Diviſions are, this cannot be had, or if it be in ſome meaſure, is often confined to an inconſiderable Party, and each particular diviſion wants the aſſiſtance of the reſt; ſo that the breach of their Catholick Love and Communion neceſſarily makes a breach in their comfort, and hinders the mutual ſympathizing aſſiſting and comforting one another. *Phil.* 2, 1, 2.

5. Peace tends to the increaſe of the Church; when our Lord repeated his Petitions for Unity,

he twice alledgeth one and the ſame reaſon, *that the World might know that God had ſent him*; John 17. 21, 23: As if the union and love of his Followers were the ſtrongeſt proof of the Divinity of their Maſter, and the powerfulleſt perſwaſive to Jews and Heathens to acknowledge and receive him for their Lord and Saviour; as if his excellent Doctrin, admirable Precepts and extraordinary Miracles would not do without it; and indeed though Inſtruction be neceſſary, and People periſh for want of Knowledge; yet Inſtruction without Example will do little good, and no Example is more open to obſervation than that of Peace and Love, and the want thereof in the Preachers of Truth makes the beſt Doctrin in their Mouths ſuſpected, hardens the Wicked in their ſin, and tempts many to Atheiſm: If you ſpeak

with

with disagreeing Tongues, Unbelievers will say you are Mad, and sit down in the Seat of the Scorner, to allude to 1 *Cor.* 14. 23.

6. Peace is a great means of Edifying by the means of Grace: The Apostle in *Eph.* 4. 16. speaks of the close and intimate Union of the Body of Christ, as a necessary means to receiving increase from Christ, and edifying it self in love; and *Col.* 2. 2. being knit together in love, is laid down as a means to the full assurance of understanding, to the full practical perswasion of the Truth, and excellency of the Gospel; and the want of this render'd the solemn Assemblies of the *Corinthians* fruitless and barren, 1 *Cor.* 11. 17. St. *Paul* chargeth them with a sad miscarriage in their Spiritual Traffick, growing worse in the use of what should have made them better, the Holy Supper of the Lord; and the

reason is given *Ver.* 18. *I hear there be Divisions among you.* Divisions abate the fervency of our Prayers, blunt the edge of our Devotions, seize on the vitals of Christianity, evaporate the life and power of Religion in impertinent squabble; and unless Almighty Grace prevent, will quickly spread like a Gangrene, so as to eat out the heart thereof.

7. Peace in Christian Churches is an Emblem of Heaven; the more that part of the Church which is Militant here below doth abound in Love and Peace, the more it resembles that part which is triumphant above: This is indeed the great difference between Angels and Devils, Heaven and Hell; the Devils have great degrees of Power and Knowledge, perhaps not much below what Angels have; but Angels and Glorified Saints abound in Love, Sweetness and

Benignity, and live in the joyful uninterrupted exercise of mutual Endearments; whereas a Spirit of Malice and Envy, Hatred and Revenge, is the very complexion of Satan, and temper of Hell. But O how happy will it be to dwell in that Society, where there's no Mistake or Envy, Ignorance or Prejudice, or carnal Interest to occasion the least Jar or Discord, but all pure Peace, Seraphick Love and perfect Harmony, as with God, so also between themselves; where the strange Fire of misguided Zeal is extinguished by the more powerful Flames of Heavenly Love, and the unhappy names of dividing Sects are no more known; where dark and deep Mysteries, little doubtful Truths, and ambiguous Words and Phrases no longer occasion any Brawls or Contentions; where *Luther* and *Calvin* and all the Saints of God perfectly accord

together, ſpeak the ſame Language, join in the ſame Praiſes, and pleaſingly entertain and embrace one another, with all the endearments of intimate Friends and Companions. And as we long for this Bleſſed State, ſo 'tis our great Duty, and will be our Happineſs to let down as much of Heaven on Earth as we can, to anticipate our future joys by an enlarged love towards all Saints, and being at Peace among our ſelves.

III. General.

Directions for the maintaining and promoting of Peace.

1. Remove the Cauſes of unpeaceableneſs; the Effects will not be taken away, except the Cauſes ceaſe. This Diſeaſe will prove Mortal, and ſtill Torment us, except the Fuel that feeds it be taken away; except that Generation of Vipers be ſlain, which hath for ſo many Ages torn out the Bowels of our

our Common Mother, the Church, we must never expect our wide breaches will be healed. I shall therefore take a short view of those Distempers, that have so miserably infected us, that the discovery may help to their Cure, and restore the primitive healthful Temper of Christianity; and while I mention the *Achans* that have sickned our Camp, and infected our *Israel*, I beseech you, that you would cast them out of your Hearts, and have no fellowship with these unfruitful Works of Darkness. Be ashamed of complaining for want of Peace, if you wilfully cherish that poysonous Brood, that will otherwise prove your ruin.

1. Unmortifyed Sin. Ungodliness is the great Divider; and till we are partakers of the same sanctifying Spirit, 'tis impossible we should

ſhould love as Brethren. Jam. 4. 11
'Tis as poſſible for the Wolf to lie down with the Lamb, as for Wicked Men to love the truly Godly. While we will not work in the ſame Vineyard, nor walk in the ſame way, nor chuſe the ſame Imployment, nor delight in the ſame Spiritual Duties, how can it be poſſible to agree together? 'Tis a vain thing to pretend agreement in Articles of Faith, while we will not lovingly agree in practical Holineſs. 'Tis highly unreaſonable for Eph. 4. 3. wicked Wretches to rail againſt Chriſtians (like *Ahab* againſt *Elijah*) as Troublers of *Iſrael*, when they themſelves are the Grand Incendiaries: Theſe Men, like *Nero* of old, caſt Firebrands into the Sanctuary, and then lay their guilt at true Chriſtians Doors: They hold the moſt damnable Errors, and practical Hereſies, and thus render Union

Union impoſſible: They pretend pity to the Wounded Church, and yet throw away the Salve and Plaiſter that ſhould cure it: They complain that the Garment of Chriſt is rent, and yet throw away the Needle that ſhould ſow it up: They pretend to be grieved to ſee the ſpiritual Building ſhaking, yet throw away the Lime and Mortar, the Pins and the Nails that ſhould cement and join the Parts together. Thus do they who cry up Love and Unity, and yet hate Holineſs wherein Chriſtian Union conſiſts: To hear an Ungodly Man, who is really of no Religion at all, but againſt the life and practice of all, cry out of the many ways of Religion among Chriſtians, is as if a Blackmoor ſhould blame another for a Spot in his Face, or a Murderer rebuke a Man for an angry Word, *Follow Peace* therefore *with all Men*, and

and Holineſs, without which no Man ſhall ſee the Lord, Heb. 12. 14.

2. Pride: This we find already arraigned by the wiſeſt of Men as the great Makebate and Troubler of the World; *Prov.* 13. 10. *Only by Pride cometh Contention.* As this is true of Civil Striſes, ſo more eſpecially of Religious or rather Irreligious Jars and Contentions; Men are ſo Wiſe in their own Conceits, that they are angry with every one that is not of the ſame level, and impatient of Contradiction; while many are very hot in Exclamations againſt the Political Antichriſt, they obſerve not this Antichriſtian Temper in themſelves; they are juſtly offended at others for uſurping God's Prerogative, ſitting in his Throne, and claiming a Title of Infallibility; but do not theſe Fools envy the Pope, and like *Adam* deſire to be God's that their Name may be honour'd,

honour'd, and their Will be done through the Earth? Let us therefore entertain an humble ſuſpicion of our own Underſtandings, remembring that an over confident perſuaſion of our own Knowledge is a certain ſign of Ignorance, and he that thinks he knows moſt, is commonly moſt miſtaken: 'Twas not for nothing that the wiſeſt of Men doth ſo frequently give that caution, *Be not Wiſe in thy own Conceit*, Prov. 3. 3. 26. 12.

3. Cenſoriouſneſs: The cenſorious Backbiter is the Devils Miniſter to Preach down Love, abate Charity, and exhort to the hatred of the Brethren. Have not our unnatural heats been owing to this original? Are not we too apt to cenſure thoſe that agree not with us in every punctilio, and readily take up an evil Report againſt them? Is not this contrary to the lovely Grace of Charity, which

which thinketh no Evil, misconstrues not the Actions and Intentions of others, rejoyceth not in Iniquity, but believeth all things, and hopeth all things, is unapt to believe ill without apparent grounds, and hopes as long as there is any reason for hope?

Cor. 13. 4, 5. *Psal.* 15. 3. *Rom.* 14. 4.

4. Undue admiration of particular Persons or Parties: This was the *Corinthian* Error that divided and miserably shattered that flourishing Church; one liked the powerful plainness of *Paul*, another the eloquence of *Apollos*, and a third the perspicuity of *Peter*, and a fourth was above all outward Ordinances, pretending to the immediate Teachings of Christ. Upon this, they vilified all others, except those that they had set up for an Oracle: We may

1 *Cor.* 1. 12. 3. 4.

suppose

ſuppoſe them diſputing one with another after this manner.

One, I am of *Paul*, did you ne'er hear *Paul* Preach? how clearly doth he unfold the deep Myſteries of Salvation! how ſweetly doth he diſplay the unſearchable Riches of Chriſt! how convincingly doth he argue, and how excellently doth he direct in the way to Salvation! As for *Apollos*, he guilds over his Diſcourſes with ſpecious Eloquence and gaudy Bravery; but *Paul* ſhews the truth in the plaineſt Dreſs, which beſt becomes her; and as for *Cephas*, he is indeed fit to Catechize weak and ignorant Chriſtians, but he tells me nothing but what I knew before; they therefore ſhew themſelves Men of ſmall Judgment, that are for *Apollos* or *Cephas*; I am for *Paul*. Another I am of *Apollos*: Let who will be for *Paul* and *Cephas*, could I ſit alway under *A-*

pollos

pollos his Miniſtry, how happy ſhould I be? How movingly doth he Preach, with what a happy fluency doth he inſinuate himſelf into his Hearers, and by his Pathetical Eloquence almoſt conſtrain attention! One while he cloaths his Speech in a Silken Dialect, dips each Word in a Tear, and ſteeps each Phraſe in Hony, that he may win on his Auditors; another while, he breaths out Flames and Terrors, and cauſes the ſtouteſt Heart to quake and tremble. As for *Paul* he is rude in Speech, homely in his Expreſſions, and hath no Majeſty nor Preſence in a Pulpit: I admire therefore their Ignorance that are for him; I am for *Apollos*. A Third, I am for *Cephas*: How doth he ſtoop to the loweſt and meaneſt capacity! doth not Preach about ſuch deep Myſteries as *Paul*, nor with ſuch flaunting Eloquence as *Apollos*, but feeds

us with the ſincere Milk of the Word, and teaches ſo plainly that the moſt Ignorant may underſtand him: I wonder therefore he is no more followed, and that *Paul* and *Apollos* are preferred before him: I am for *Cephas*. Thus we may ſuppoſe the *Corinthians* might jangle among themſelves, for which St. *Paul* ſo ſharply reproves them; and may not we take his Reproofs to our ſelves? are not we apt to heap up to our ſelves Teachers, and have Mens Perſons in admiration, ſo to value ſome, as unreaſonably to ſcorn and ſlight others, forgetting that they are all the Servants of Chriſt, deputed and ſent by him, that in much Wiſdom and Mercy hath given them various Giſts for the Edification of the Church; that as one is eminent in ſome reſpects, ſo in others their Brethren may exceed them. We muſt conſider they all Preach the

same Doctrin, and direct to the same way to Salvation; and it is more the fault of our own corrupt Hearts, than of the Minister, if we profit not by their Labours.

2. Be much in Contemplation of the Love of God in Christ: This will blow up a holy Flame of Love to him and all his Members; when we remember how dearly and tenderly Christ loves all his Saints, this will constrain us to lay aside all Wrath and Bitterness, and live in Peace; such a glorious precedent must needs be a cogent Argument, and can hardly be resisted. Love and Peace is the very Image of our Heavenly Father, the Copy Christ hath set us, and the Lesson he hath written for our Learning in Lines of his own Blood. An hearty Love to God will engage us to be at peace with the whole fraternity of Christians, and love

1 John 4. 7, 8. Eph. 5. 1, 2.

love them without Dissimulation.

3. Make the great design of Religion yours, *viz.* the advancement of Holiness, and recovery of the Image of God in the Souls of Men: Remember Religion is not designed meerly to fill your Heads with airy notions, to tip your Tongues for Discourse, or enable you to talk plausibly for the truth; that it consists not in little Speculative Opinions, or Ceremonious Trifles; but the great design of it is to direct us in the government of our Passions, subduing our Lusts, and conquering the Impediments that hinder our Recovery and Salvation. In a word, Religion consists in a penitent return to God by Faith in Christ, and Obedience to his Gospel; let us take this to be our main business, then we shall have so much work to do at home, that we shall have little inclination to pry into the Infirmities of others, or quarrel with them. That Man would

be esteemed by all as bereav'd of his Wits, that should be picking causeless Quarrels with his Neighbours about a Chip of Wood, or a broken Hedge, when a Fire in his House is consuming his Goods and Children. We all stand on the Borders of the Grave, and Confines of Eternity; our great business is to quench the Flames of Lust, which otherwise will prepare us for Everlasting Burning, and therefore surely we should not waste our precious Minutes in strife and contention.

4. Avoid Extreams in disputable Points. Every Truth lyes in the middle between two Falshoods, and he that goes far from one is apt to slip into the other. After all the confidence and boast of disputers, there will be uncertainty in lesser Points, and when we travel in uncertain Roads, 'tis best to chuse the middle; here we may be

be ſure to meet with Charity and Peace, and very probably Truth in their Company. The great occaſion of our Differences hath been that Men have look'd ſo much at the evil of one Extream as to forget the Error on the other ſide; like an ignorant Phyſician, who to Cure a Man of a dead Palſie caſts him into a Phrenzy. I dare with ſome confidence affirm, that moſt of thoſe Diſputes, that are ſo hotly agitated among Proteſtants, are in the Extreams, and conſiſt more in words than things, becauſe the Curſe of *Babel* has ſo confounded our Languages, that though our Sentiments are much the ſame, we underſtand not one anothers meaning: And if Men would but hearken to calm diſpaſſionate Reaſon, they might ſoon find out ſuch healing Reconciling Principles, as would quickly make us one among our ſelves, and a terror to our Romiſh

mish Adversaries. Let the Apo
stles Counsel be in this sense there
fore obeyed, *Phil.* 4. 5. *Let you
Moderation be known unto all Men.*

5. Avoid unpeaceable Dividers
those who make it their work t
foment Differences, and stir up
Strife, and sow Seeds of Discord
among Brethren, are
Prov. 6. 16, 19. said to be an abomi-
nation to the Lord:
take upon them a very ill employ-
ment, and carry on a design quite
contrary to the Gospel of Peace
and therefore are to be avoided
that they may be ashamed: I speak
not this of my self, but the Apostle
Paul is very earnest in the same
Advice, *Rom.* 16. 17, 18. *Now I
beseech you Brethren, mark them
which cause Divisions and Offences
contrary to the Doctrin which ye
have learned, and avoid them; for
they that are such serve not our Lord
Jesus Christ, but their own Belly, and*

by

by good Words and fair Speeches deceive the Hearts of the Simple.

6. Frequently joyn together in the same Exercises of Religious Worship: When Christians come together in the same Assemblies, this naturally tends to abate their strangeness, calm their Spirits, remove unreasonable Jealousies and Suspicions, and inclines them to a Cordial Endeared Love. This was one great means of promoting that hearty affection, which was among the Members of the primitive Church, *They continu'd stedfastly in the Apostles Doctrin and Fellowship, and breaking of Bread and Prayer*: *Acts* 2. 42. And the same method would retrieve that love and peace, the want of which hath crumbl'd us into parties, and been the unhappy occasion of so many woful Effects. Did we but more frequently resort to the House of Prayer, more diligently hearken

to,

to, and more faithfully improve Miniſterial Inſtructions, more readily ſubmit to Paſtoral Diſcipline, more carefully watch over one another, and more tenderly adviſe, and reprove, and edifie one another; more ſolemnly pray with and for one another, and more conſtantly celebrate that uniting Ordinance, the Lords Supper, together, we ſhould ſoon ſee the Bleſſed peaceful effects of ſo doing. Did Neighbouring Churches counſel each other, and maintain mutual correſpondences for the advancement of Love and Holineſs, occaſionally communicate together, when convenient, and look upon themſelves, not as divided Bodies, or carrying on ſeparate Intereſts, but all united under the ſame Head, acting according to the ſame Rule, and for the ſame end, this would engage us to mutual offices of peace, and we ſhould readily

readily comply with the Apostle's Counsel, *Eph.* 4. 3. *Keep the unity of the Spirit in the Bond of peace.*

Many more Directions might be added, but these, if well practis'd, would quickly extinguish those Heats and Animosities, which have made Earth so like to Hell; and produce those Heavenly Fruits of peace, which might create a Paradise here below, make the Church, which in a very sad sense is now Militant, nearly resemble the Church Triumphant.

And now Men and Brethren, what remains, but that we put in practice the Duties recommended? Then might we hope our Land would become a *Goshen*, not only in respect of Spiritual Light, but also of its freedom from those Locusts and Caterpillars, dividing Lusts, that have so long wasted and consumed us. Blessed be God that he hath in so great a measure heal'd

our Breaches, and thus far united us together: May not we hope, that this is but the beginning of what God designs for us, like the dawning of the Morning in order to a perfect day? May not we hope, that those Glorious Times are hastning, when *the Lord shall be one, and his Name one*; Zach. 14. 9. and that that Promise is near its accomplishment, *Jer.* 32. 39. *I will give them one Heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their Children after them*? May not we hope, that the Philadelphian state, which some expect, now draws nigh, when Brotherly Love shall flourish, and be more enlarg'd. How happy would it be, if this Union were yet more extensive, if the Name of Reformed Christian were only known, and all those divided Names laid aside, whereby we have been unhappily distinguish'd! By Mutual Com-

Compliances and Condeſcentions this is no impoſſible Task. And who knows but this beginning may iſſue in ſo happy a Concluſion? This may well be the ſubject of our Wiſhes, and earneſt conſtant Prayers.

John 13. 34.

A new Commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another, as I have loved you; that ye also love one another.

AMong all the advantages of the Christian Religion, wherein it exceeds the defective Rules of Pagan Philosophy, and obscure Institutions of *Moses*, there is nothing wherein it more excels than in the Doctrin of Love and Charity; a Duty which is urg'd in the plainest Words, and press'd by the strongest Arguments, and made not the high qualification of some eminent Saints, but a necessary essential part of the

new

new Creature: A Duty not only neceſſary to ſome inferior uſes, but to all the great ends of Religion, and not to be diſpenſed with on any pretence: A Duty that is made the Badg and Character of Chriſt's Diſciples, and that which our dying Redeemer ſtrictly charged his Followers to obſerve; as in the Text, *A new Commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another.*

Our Saviour knowing the time of his Departure was near at hand, in this Chapter gives his Diſciples an admirable inſtance of his condeſcending Love in ſtooping to that ſervile Office of waſhing their Feet: And this he did on purpoſe that they ſhould imitate him, and not think the loweſt Offices of Charity for their Brethrens good, too mean and baſe for them. Afterwards having given the

Ver. 13,14,15,28.

Sop to *Judas* who went out with an intention to betray him, he tells his Disciples of his speedy Separation from them; and lest they should be too much cast down at hearing of his Departure, he tells them that he should be Glorified, and God the Father in him; *i. e.* that he should give great discoveries of his Deity, and God the Father would discover the unsearchable depths of his Wisdom, inconceivable heights of his Love, and infinite strictness of his Holiness and Justice by his Death, and advance him straightway to the highest degrees of Glory: And then being filled with an affectionate love to them, he speaks as an indulgent Father to the Sons of his Love, *Little Children, yet a little while I am with you*, ver. 33. and as if he should have said, O my Disciples whom I love with

Ver. 31, 32.

no

no leſs ardent affection than a Father doth his darling and tender Infant; there remains but a ſmall ſpace wherein I ſhall make my abode with you in the Fleſh, therefore as I ſaid to the Hardened *Jews*, *Whither I go, ye cannot yet come*: One Requeſt and Command I your dying Lord leave with you, Let my Love to you be the rule and meaſure of your Love to one another.

A New Commandment I give unto you.

There is ſome difference among Expoſitors concerning the Senſe of this Expreſſion.

Some render it this renewed Commandment, this Command that hath been almoſt obliterated by the corrupting Doctrins of the Phariſees, and falſe Gloſſes of the Jewiſh Teachers, I now by my Doctrin and Example renew unto you. Some by New, underſtand

most excellent: Thus we read of a New Song, a most excellent Song, of New Wine, of the most delicious sort and kind; *q. d.* Whatever Commands you neglect, be sure to comply with this the most excellent of all. Subjects take care to observe the New Commands of their Princes; let your careful Obedience to this be as if it were newly promulged: So others understand it.

Psal. 33. 3. *Mat.* 26. 29.

A New Commandment, say others, because we must be still renewing it; *Owe no Man any thing but to love one another*, Rom. 13. 8. Pay all your Debts, but this Debt of Love you must be always paying and yet always owing.

I rather think it is called a New Commandment, because it is expounded after a New manner, directed

rected according to a new Rule, and required in higher measures and degrees than ever before; for though this Duty was not wholly unknown to Mankind before, yet never was it so taught or encouraged; never was such an illustrious example given of it, nor such weight and stress laid upon it in any former Institution; and special Measures of Assistance proper to Gospel times are vouchsafed to work it in our Hearts. So that it is as if our Saviour should have said, "Whereas it hath been said by "them of old time, thou shalt "love thy Neighbour as thy self, "I give you a new Rule, *as I "have loved you, so love one ano-"ther*, after a more indearing man-"ner than the *Jews*, that the "World may see the excellency

Bishop Tillotson's *Sermon on this Text.*

1 *Thes.* 4. 9.

of

" of my Doctrin above that of
" *Moſes* Love; bear an hearty e-
" ſteem one for another, and
" imploy your ſelves in mutual
" Offices of Kindneſs, as acknow-
" ledging one another to be Bre-
" thren and Fellow Diſciples.
" *As I have loved you*; though
" you cannot love one another to
" ſuch a degree, yet teſtify your
" love by ſuch inſtances, and to
" ſuch degrees as your nature is
" capable of.

This is the meaning of the Text; Chriſt came into the World to demonſtrate and exerciſe his Father's Love and his own: Love he came to kindle in the Souls of Men; and therefore gives us this excellent Commandment.

The Words being thus explained, the Obſervation I ſhall raiſe from them is this,

That the laſt and great Command of our dying Saviour, is, that Chriſtians

Christians should love one another, as Christ hath loved them.

In Handling of which I shall observe this Method:

1. I shall inquire who are the Objects of this Love.

2. In what respects must we love one another as Christ hath loved us.

3. Make some Practical improvement of the whole Discourse.

1. The Objects of this Love.

1. There is a common Love due to Men as Men; all Men are God's Workmanship, bearing his natural Image, and capable of being serviceable to his Glory: Thus, *Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thy self*; all Men are our Neighbours, as partakers of the same Nature and capable of the same Happiness. Special love to Christians

ſtians doth not diminiſh, but enlarge our common love to Men: Wherever we ſee any part of Gods Image, we muſt love it. Our Saviour when he beheld that rich young Gentleman, *Mark* 10. 21. he loved him; he could not but be well pleaſed with his Morality, though he was diſpleaſed he went no further. Thus all the footſteps of Divine Goodneſs muſt be lov'd: Vertue even in an Heathen is to be admired: This will conſtrain us to Pity, Pray for, and help all in diſtreſs, according to our ability. We muſt not be like the unconcerned Prieſt and mercileſs Levite in the Parable, *Luke* 10. 30. who paſſed by the wounded Man, and would not relieve him, but like the good *Samaritan*, who ſpoke comfortably to him, ſupplied his Wants, and bound up his Wounds.

2. There

2. There is a Love due to Enemies. Other Mens Faults and Sins against us, give us no dispensation for the non-payment of this great Debt of Natures Law, Loving all of the same kind. Christ came to mortifie all Inclinations to Rage and Revenge, and commands Affections and Words, and Actions of Kindness and Benignity, to those that have expressed the contrary unto us: *We must love our Enemies*, *Mat.* 5. 44. be cordially affected towards them; wish them all the good in the World; especially when they most need, the good of their Souls; Their Conviction, Reformation and Amendment. Other Mens Enmity must not pervert or blind our Judgments, or hinder us from discerning what is amiable in them; nor must it corrupt our Affections, or hinder us from loving what is truly lovely. We must *bless them that curse us.* Not ren-

der

der reviling for reviling, but give them friendly courteous words, though they rail againſt us. We muſt *do good to them*, feed and cloth them, if hungry or naked; reſcue them if in danger; comfort them if in diſtreſs, and all without the leaſt Tincture of Malice or Revenge. We muſt *pray for them*: Forgive them our ſelves, and pray to God to forgive them too. Thus did our Saviour; in the midſt of his dying Agonies forgets not this Teſtimony of his Love to his imbitter'd Adverſaries, and with a generoſity beyond Example, pleads excuſes for their Sin, ſaying, *Father forgive them, for they know not what they do*, Luke 23. 34.

3. There is a ſpecial Love due to all whom we charitably hope to be true Chriſtians. To this we are directed by the Text. Whoever makes a ſeemingly ſerious profeſſion of Faith and Holineſs, and doth not

not disprove it by a contrary practice, is to be allow'd the Name and special Love of a Christian. 'Tis Gods Prerogative to see the Heart; 'Tis our Duty to observe the Life; and he that makes a credible Profession, and doth not live in wilful Sin is charitably to be esteemed as a Member of Christ. Though he differ from us in many Points, yet if he holds the Foundations of the Christian Faith, and manifests the Grace of God in his Life, 'tis uncharitable for us to judge he is not the object of Gods special Love, and therefore it is unreasonable he should not be the object of ours. Though he be weak in Parts and Gifts, subject to many Passions and Infirmities consistent with real Grace; though his Profession reach not to that heigth as to make him Eminent, and his Conversation be not so exact as to make you confident of his Sincerity,

ty, yet if he profeſs to be a true Chriſtian, and live not in any Sin, which is the certain mark of an unbeliever, he is to be lov'd as Chriſt hath loved us. Gods Love indeed is Guided by Infallibility, he loves none with a ſpecial Affection but ſincere penitent Believers; but our Love muſt be guided by our own weak and fallible diſcerning. Where we ſee the Fruits of Piety in Mens Lives, we muſt judge of the truth of their Graces according to the probability which thoſe ſigns diſcover. Though all be not ſo Eminent in Grace as *Peter*, *James* and *John*, yet as the weakeſt Diſciples if ſincere are accepted by God, ſo ought they to be embrac'd by us. Chriſt will not break the bruiſed Reed, nor quench the ſmoaking Flax. Nor ought we to deſpiſe the Babes in Chriſt, but love them as Members of the ſame Body, and Heirs of the ſame Inheritance.

2. In

2. In what reſpects muſt we love one another, as Chriſt hath loved us?

Anſ. Not in all Reſpects. Chriſt ſo loved us as to purchaſe Grace and Glory for us. But we are not capable of thus Loving one another. We cannot pay down a valuable ſatisfaction for our own Sins, much leſs can we ſuper-erogate or purchaſe pardon for others. Our own Oyl muſt be perfum'd with the Incenſe of Chriſts Merits, before it can make our Faces ſhine before God; and we have ſo little for our ſelves that we have none to ſpare for our Brethren. Chriſt alone paid down a compleat ſatisfaction for them and us; nor can we love our Brethren with an equal degree of Love to what Chriſt did. He had not the Spirit by meaſure, but the fulneſs of the Godhead dwelt in him; and therefore he lov'd us without any

ſinful mixture or imperfection; but our Love as well as other Graces admit of very great defects. The word (As) therefore doth not denote equality in degree, but likeneſs in kind. Our Love to one another muſt bear ſome likeneſs and reſemblance of Chriſts Love to us.

1. In the Inward Properties of it.

2. In the outward Expreſſions of it.

1. In the inward Properties of it.

1. Our Love muſt be ſincere and unfeigned as Chriſt's was. Chriſt did not Hypocritically pretend Love, or Diſſemblingly feign Affection to us, but ſincerely lov'd us. His Proteſtations of Love were all real and hearty; not in Word and in Tongue only, but in Deed and in Truth. Thus ought our Love to be *without Diſſimulation*, *Rom.* 2. 9.

A pre-

A pretended Disciple indeed may like *Judas* kiss and betray, make large Protestations of kindness to the Saints, and under this pretext of Affection hide a malicious heart, and contrive their ruin. But the true Christians Professions of Love as well as Prayers to God proceed not from feigned Lips. 2 *Cor.* 8. 8.

2. Our Love to one another must be fervent as Christ's was. 'Twas Love incomprehensibly great and ardent, that brought our Lord from Heaven to Earth, carry'd him through the difficulties of Poverty, Reproach and Scorn, enabled him to bear the contradiction of Sinners, and the pain and shame of the Cross; herein Christ as well as God the Father *commended his love towards us*, Rom. 5. 8. rendred it great and admirable beyond all expression or parallel, *In that while we were yet Sinners Christ*

died for us. We must act according to this pattern, *Love one another with a pure heart fervently*, 1 Pet. 1. 22. Our Love must not be cold and indifferent, frozen or congeal'd; but we must entertain a fervent Affection one for another.

3. Our Love must be prevailing as Christ's was. Christ lov'd us above Gold or Silver, or Earthly Pomp and Greatness, above his own Temporal Ease and Delight; and was ready to wade through Storms and Dangers, and Difficulties for our sakes. So must we love our Brethren, above our Carnal Interest, Honour, Wealth and Pleasure. Thus *Moses* evidenc'd his Love to the people of God by forsaking the dazling Honours and bewitching Pleasures of *Pharaoh*'s Court, and chusing Affliction with them rather than Sin. Thus must

Heb. 11. 25, 26.

must we be willing to renounce our own Ease and Liberty for their sakes, when God and his Honour calls. Nay we must Love them better than the neareſt ungodly Relations. Chriſt lov'd thoſe that were related to him in the Spirit, far better than the neareſt ungodly Relations according to the Fleſh. Mark 3. 35.

There is indeed a natural ſenſitive Love and Propenſion towards near Relations, and we are ordinarily bound in the firſt place to provide for them, ſupply their wants, and give them theſe outward effects of our Love: But ſtill we muſt have a higher rational eſteem of the godly and value their Graces above the moſt lovely natural perfections of others; and the beſt muſt be prefer'd in point of Honour, though others may be prefer'd in point of Maintenance.

4. Our Love muſt be impartial and

and universal as Christ's was. He did not confine it to his own Countrymen the Jews, and die to procure Pardon, Grace and Glory for them only, but for us Gentiles also, while he was upon Earth: The Faith of the Centurion, and importunity of the Canaanitish Woman (tho' Aliens from the Common-wealth of *Israel*) attracted his Esteem and Admiration; and where-ever he beheld the Grace of God and Image of Holiness, he lov'd it.

'Tis very observable, he is more sharp and severe in his Invectives against the Pharisees than any other Persons; because of their stingy narrow Spirit, confining Religion to their own particular Sect, and scorning and despising all that were not of their own Party; as if all the rest of Mankind were in a Reprobate Damnable State.

Our Christian Love must thus resemble our Saviours. It must be enlarg'd

enlarg'd to all Saints, to the whole Fraternity of Christians. To be partial in our Love is a sign 'tis unsound; to make our own Opinions the *Shiboleth* to distinguish between a true and counterfeit Christian, is very unreasonable. Where there is a Profession of the Baptismal Covenant, the Essentials of the Christian Faith, and a Life in some measure answerable; we must love such as Christians, notwithstanding their mistakes and erroneous Principles in lesser points. We justly condemn the Church of *Rome* for confining Salvation to themselves, and Damning all the World besides: Let us take heed how we condemn our selves by contracting the Church of God into a narrower compass, lest we censoriously damn those whom Christ will save, and perhaps place on higher Seats of Glory than our selves. We know

Philem. 5. *Col.* 1. 4. 1 *Pet.* 1. 17.

who

who it was that ſaid, Luke 18. 12. Lord, I thank thee, I am not as this Publican, when he was really in a far worſe condition: Our Love to a Party muſt not blind our Judgments, or pervert our Affections as to all the reſt: Keep up therefore an impartial univerſal Love to all profeſſed Chriſtians as ſuch, and 1 Cor. 1. 10. hate a dividing Spirit. Take heed how you ſtigmatize thoſe with the Name of Hereticks, who ſhall ſtand at the Right Hand of Chriſt; and take not up the Devils accurſed Imployment to become Accuſers of thoſe that are really your Brethren.

5. Our Love muſt be proportion'd to the degrees of their Grace, as Chriſt's was. Chriſt, that certainly knows who are moſt furniſh'd with Divine Grace, muſt needs love theſe with an higher degree than others

others of a lower Form and Class in Christianity. St. *John* who it seems had the most ardent love and Eminent degrees of Grace among the Apostles, was his peculiar Favourite and Darling Disciple, had the highest place next his Lord, lay in his Bosom, according to the custom of those Eastern Countreys, which was to lye and not to sit at Meals, and is call'd *the Disciple whom Jesus loved*, John 13. 23. Christs love was not a fond unaccountable Passion, but the result of his Reason and Judgment. Because he lov'd him best, we may therefore justly conclude he was really above the rest in Piety. Thus must our love be proportion'd: Some are but weak Christians, and we can have but small and doubtful perswasions of their sincerity: Others are stronger, and we may be more confident as to them. The one must

be lov'd as Christians, but the other with an higher degree, as bearing more lively representations of the holy God: We must not respect the Persons of any, but their goodness; and love those best that are really so. This Property will discover the Hypocrisie of many, who will bear with Holiness in a lower degree, and speak well of those who (though Godly in the main) are too remiss and careless in their Conversations, but swell with Rage and Malice against those that are most Eminent for Piety. What doth this Temper shew but a Graceless Heart? if we bear not the highest Love to the best Christians how dwelleth the Love of God in us? Alas! can infinite perfect Holiness be lov'd by him, that loves not the best Representations of it, that this imperfect state affords? If the light of the Moon, which is not without its spots, doth offend

us; how can we bear the far more resplendent brightness of the Sun itself?

How unmeet is he for the Communion of Angels and perfected Spirits, that is not pleas'd; much more that is offended with the highest degrees of Holiness in this state of Imperfection? The true Christian having a prevailing Love to God, will Love his Image wherever he finds it; and where it is more clear and unsullied, and drawn out in more Beautiful Characters, his Love will be proportionably greater and more affectionate.

6. Our Love must be compassionate and sympathizing. Christ could not refrain from weeping when he beheld *Jerusalem*, where was the then visible Church of God, and laments her foreseen destruction: When *Peter* deny'd him

Luke 19. 41, 42.

not once, but thrice, with Curſes and Imprecations: He did not diſregard him, as he might juſtly do, ſuch a perfidious Servant; but though he was unconcern'd for himſelf, and ſilently bore the ſlanders of the Witneſſes; yet he manifeſts his concern for *Peter*; by his compaſſionate looks, teſtify'd his ſorrow for his Sin, and drew not his Eyes away till he had look'd him into Repentance. Nay, tho' our Head be now in Heaven, yet he hath a compaſſionate ſenſe of the Extremities of his Members, and accounts all the Affronts, Perſecutions and Reproaches offer'd to them, as done to himſelf. Thus when *Saul* (then a Perſecutor) breath'd out nothing but Blood and Slaughter againſt the Churches, He cries from Heaven, *Saul, Saul, why perſecuteſt thou me*, Acts 9. 4. He is a merciful faithful High-Prieſt that is touch'd with a feel-

ing of our Infirmities, and bears a compassionate Love to all his Members in Misery: And the same mind ought to be in us that was in him; we ought to sympathize with our Fellow Members in distress, and remember the afflicted, as being our selves in the Body, *Heb.* 13. 3. liable to the same Tryals and Parts of the same Mystical Body of Christ. If any Member be in pain, all the rest are discompos'd, and when some of the Members of Christ are discompos'd, 'tis natural for the rest to sympathize with them, and be compassionately sensible of their trouble. Thus we are commanded *to weep with them that weep*, Rom. 12, 15. *To bear one anothers Burdens, and so fulfil the Law of Christ*, Gal. 6. 2.

7. Our Love must be constant and abiding as Christ's love was; Christ's love to us was not for a small space of time, but lasting

and uninterrupted, *He loved his own, and he loved them to the end*, John 13. 1. And the nearer his end appeared, the higher marks of his Love did he give them; the failings and miscarriages of his Disciples did not remove his Love, or cause him to withdraw his affection; their ignorance and unbelief after all his Teachings and Instructions, their fiery unseasonable Rage against the *Samaritans*, their Pride and Ambition, Rashness and Cowardise, and the base Perfidiousness of *Peter* did not incline him to lay aside his Thoughts of Love, or leave the work of our Redemption unfinished; but he still loved them to the Death: Thus must we love our Brethren, overlook their Failings, pass by their Infirmities, admire what is lovely, and neglect what may cool our Affections. This new Commandment must be every day renewed

newed by us; this is a Leſſon we muſt be always learning, and a Duty we muſt be always imploying our ſelves about. We muſt ſtill be abiding in our Love, till we enter among that happy Society, where all Sins and unlovely Imperfections ſhall be done away, and we ſhall always ſolace our ſelves with pleaſing views of the Divine Purity and Holineſs, and the numerous Pictures and Repreſentations of it among Angels and Glorified Saints.

2. Our Love to one another muſt reſemble Chriſt's Love to us in the outward Expreſſions of it.

1. In the intimacies of our Friendſhip and Familiarity one with another; Chriſt ſo loves all true Chriſtians, as to enter into the ſtricteſt bands of amity with them; he is nearly united to them as their Head and Husband, and calls them his Friends and his

Spouse; he is the Head and they are the Members; the Vine, and they are the Branches; the Foundation, and they are the Building; the Root, and they are the Fruit. The Communications of his Grace, the quickening assistances and influences of his Spirit are imparted to them; he writes his Law in their Hearts, and causeth them to run in the way of his Commandments; sanctifies their Natures, pardons their Sins, prevailingly intercedes for them, and prepares them by Grace for Glory: He hath communion with them in his Ordinances, familiarly converseth with them in his Sacraments, and is continually fitting them for that happy Fellowship with Father Son and Holy Spirit which glorified Saints injoy. While he was on Earth, he selected some few Persons, prepared them by Grace

Eph. 5. 32.
John 15. 1.
Joh. 14. 22.

Grace for his Society, and then made them his familiar Friends. To them he clearly revealed the Mind and Will of God; to them he unfolded the Mysteries of his Love, and Commands of his Father; to them he explained what was spoken to others in Parables; these he blessed with his Heavenly Discourses and Pious Instructions with the special tokens of his Love, and familiar Expressions of his Friendship. Indeed he did entertain a *Judas* in his Family, but he made a strict Profession as well as the other Disciples, and was not known to be Hypocritical by any but Christ himself; and had not the wisdom of God designed by his means to bring about the great work of our Redemption, no doubt but this Son of Perdition would have been discarded and disown'd. He did indeed eat with Publicans and Sinners, but

though

though for this he was falſly accuſed as their Friend and Companion, yet he was not ſo; he eat with them as their Phyſician, and not as their Companion; did not own them for his Friends, but ſought by his holy Diſcourſe and obliging Carriage to make them ſo: And the ſame Mind ought to be in us that was alſo in him.

Though Chriſtianity allows not moroſeneſs and incivility towards others, yet all needleſs familiarity with Wicked Men is forbidden: Our Eyes (with *David's*) ought to be upon the *Faithful in the Land*, Pſal. 101. 6. To delight in wicked Company may juſtly fill us with doubts of our own ſincerity; we may know *we are paſſed from Death to Life, if we love the Brethren*, 1 John 3. 14. And we have juſt reaſon to fear we are yet in a ſtate of Death if we delight in the Ungodly. Common

civilities

civilities may be paid to Wicked Men, but ſpecial friendſhip is to be reſerved only for thoſe who we hope are the Friends of God. If we love God above all, ſurely we ſhall aſſociate moſt with them that may warm our Hearts, and raiſe our Affections, and provoke us by their Example to an holy imitation. We ought to imitate the Royal Pſalmiſt, *who was a Companion of all them that feared God*, Pſal. 119. 63. The Poverty and Meanneſs of ſuch did not leſſen his delight; he priz'd a Saint in Rags, beyond a Wicked Man though cloathed in Princely Robes, or Imperial Purple. We ought to have a friendly regard to all true Chriſtians; and though ſome becauſe of their eminency in Grace, ſuitableneſs to our Temper, Neighbourhood, and the like reaſons, may be our more intimate Friends: Yet muſt not we deſpiſe any becauſe

cauſe of their meanneſs, but as we have opportunity, give them the ſpecial tokens of our Friendſhip too. Vile Perſons muſt be contemned, and Scandalous Profeſſors muſt eſpecially be avoided; but our intimate Acquaintance ought to be the Servants of God; and the more Holy any are, the more ambitious ſhould we be of their Friendſhip and Converſe.

Pſal. 15. 4. 2 *Cor.* 5. 11.

2. In our hearty Prayers one for another. Chriſt was very earneſt in his Prayers for true Believers; they were the peculiar objects of his Love, and purchaſe of his Death, and therefore he prays for them in a peculiar manner: For *Peter*, he prays for ſtrengthening confirming Grace, *Luke* 22. 31. and he put up a famous Prayer for his Diſciples, and all that ſhould believe on him, *John* 17. that they might

might perſevere in the Faith, live in Unity, increaſe in Grace, and at laſt be tranſlated to Heaven, and abide with him in Glory. And he hath laid a ſpecial Obligation on us to do likewiſe. Hence in that excellent Form and Directory of Prayer, *Mat.* 6. 9. he teaches us to ſay, Our Father, intimating that if we would gain acceptance for our ſelves, we muſt come to God as in union with Chriſt and his univerſal Church. Our Prayers muſt not be only for our ſelves, but for the whole Church of God throughout the World; we muſt hold Communion with all Chriſtians in Faith and Love, and an holy Profeſſion thereof; and while abſent in Body, muſt be as preſent with them in Spirit, and ſtill beg of God for them a freedom from the ſame Spiritual Evils, and enjoyment of the ſame Spiritual Priviledges we would deſire for our ſelves. If

If the Pſalmiſt under the old Law pray'd for the Peace of *Jeruſalem*, Pſal. 122. 6. 137. 5, 6. and makes ſuch ſolemn Proteſtations never to forget her; ſurely it is our great duty, now the Church is ſurrounded with Enemies ſo potent and numerous, never to forget Spiritual *Zion*, but always be mindful of our *Jeruſalem*. If the legal Prieſts and Watchmen were bound to be God's Remembrancers, and give him no reſt till he eſtabliſh and make *Jeruſalem* a Praiſe in the Earth, *Iſa.* 62. 6, 7. Then ſurely it is the duty of Spiritual Watchmen under the Goſpel, to put up their Petitions with fervour for the diſtreſſed Chriſtian Churches and Servants of God. We ought with the Apoſtle to *give Thanks to God always for all Saints, and make mention of them in our Prayers*, Eph. 1. 16. Be compaſſionately ſenſible of all their

their Troubles, and continually bow our Knees before God, that all his dealings may tend to their good; that their Lives may be a credit to their Profession; and that their Faith and Love, and Patience and Humility, and Self-denial, may be effectual to convince Unbelievers, enlarge the Kingdom of Grace, and add new Inhabitants to the Kingdom of Glory.

3. In forgiving one another. Christ so loved us, as to forgive all the injuries and affronts we have offered to him; pardon of Sin is the great purchase of his Death. And though our Sins be more numerous than the Hairs of our Head, and exceed the Sands of the Sea for Multitude, yet if we sincerely repent of them, we may be assured they shall be forgiven. And as Christ doth thus testify his love to us, so must we

testify

teſtify our love to one another: Have they wrong'd and injur'd us? we muſt not bear a Spirit of Revenge, but freely forgive them: God will not forgive us except we forgive others, *Mat.* 6. 11, 14, 15. Where God pardons any, he gives them a heart to forgive others. That Servant in the Parable was very diſingenuous, who when his Lord forgave him Ten Thouſand Talents, caſt his Fellow Servant into Goal, and would not forgive him an Hundred Pence, *Mat.* 18. 23. And are not we guilty of the ſame diſingenuity, who when we know what numerous Talents God hath forgiven us, cannot paſs by a ſmall injury of our Brother againſt us? This act of Chriſtian Love you ſee is ſtrictly required, and a ſpecial degree of it is due to true Chriſtians above all others. We are bound indeed to forgive Enemies while continuing and remaining ſuch,

ſuch, ſo far as not to return Evil for Evil, to entertain no revengeful Thoughts, and perform all general Offices of Juſtice and Charity towards them. But a Friend and true Chriſtian that hath offended us, and returns to his Fidelity, muſt be forgiven and again treated and entruſted as a Friend, if he gives ſufficient Evidences of his Sorrow and Repentance for former Faults: For is he the Friend of God, and ſhall he be eſteemed as our Enemy? Is God reconciled to him, and ſhall we ſtill retain our Enmity againſt him? Surely if God be his reconciled Father, we ought to be his reconciled Brethren alſo: Account him no longer an Enemy, but a *Brother beloved*, Philem. 16. Luk. 17. 3.

4. In our Alms and Bounty to the Neceſſitous. Chriſt though he himſelf lived on the Charity of

others, and had not a ſufficient ſupply for himſelf and Diſciples, yet we find he did out of that ſmall pittance give ſomething to the Poor; for in this Chapter *Judas* who was the Steward of Chriſt's Family, bore the Bag, and was to diſburſe Mony for thoſe uſes for which his Lord deſigned it: When he went out after his receiving the Sop, the Diſciples thought he was gone either to buy Proviſions for the approaching Paſſover, or *to give ſomething to the Poor*, John 13. 29; thereby implying it was our Saviour's cuſtom to give to the Poor. And if he thus loved his poor Members, ſurely we ought to do ſo likewiſe: Thoſe who have a fruitleſs love to others, have but a fruitleſs Faith to themſelves: They who pretend love to their Brethren, and yet relieve them not

Jam. 2. 27.
1 *John* 3. 17.

not according to their ability, their Professions of Religion are vain: We are bound indeed to supply the Wants of all, even of Strangers and Enemies, according to our ability and opportunities. But to true Christians, we are bound to open our hands more wide, and be more liberal and bountiful: *Do good to all, especially to the Houshold of Faith*, Gal. 6. 10. God hath made us but Stewards of the Earthly Blessings we injoy, and given us our Stock of Worldly Goods, that we might lay them out on those whom Providence hath made the Objects of our Charity; he interprets that as done to himself, which is done to his Servants and Christ's distressed Members. Christ is resolved at the day of Judgment to insist on this Duty more than on any other. The true Christian is him- *Mat.* 25. 34.

ſelf devoted to God, and therefore will devote all he hath to him; will honour him with his Subſtance, and the firſt Fruits of his Increaſe; expend the Bleſſings received, to Cloath, Feed and Supply the Naked, Hungry and Diſtreſſed. If God hath intruſted him with many Talents, he will not be ſo unreaſonable as to think he hath therefore liberty given to pamper his Luſts, or gratify his Fleſhly Appetite; but like a Wiſe Steward will ſeek out fit Objects for his Charity; and ſeeing his Lord Redeemer out of that little which he had, gave to the Poor, will imitate his great Example; and becauſe much is given, will be proportionably liberal and bountiful.

5. In our Counſels and admonitions: Chriſt was very frequent and earneſt in his pious Counſels and Inſtructions, he did not only heal

heal the Diſeaſes of Mens Bodies, but the chief deſign of his coming was to free the Sons of Men from all their Spiritual Maladies and Diſtempers. Throughout his whole Life he was ſtill explaining to Men the whole Will of God, and to his Diſciples more plainly than to others, *Mat.* 13 11. This evidence of Brotherly Love we ought to give alſo. 'Tis not only the duty of Miniſters, but of every private Chriſtian *in his Station*, to counſel and inſtruct his Brethren, to inform the Ignorant, and ſeek their Converſion; tell them their duty and danger, and ſhew them how they may flee from the wrath to come.

And it will be their wiſdom and intereſt thus to win Souls to Chriſt, and ſave Sinners from Death and Hell. This muſt we do to the moſt vicious as we *Prov.* 11. 30. *Jam.* 5. 20.

we have opportunity: But as we owe a ſpecial degree of Love to Fellow Chriſtians, ſo we are eſpecially to counſel and admoniſh them: To adviſe them in difficulties, explain what they do not underſtand, endeavour to impart our Light to them, to increaſe their knowledge, make additions to their Grace, and further their Happineſs. He that loves his Brother will ſeek to help his Ignorance, rectifie his Miſtakes, free him from Error, and communicate his own Experiences to preſerve him from Sin, encourage him in Duty, and make his paſſage to Heaven more pleaſant and delightful.

6. In kind and friendly Reproofs. Chriſt frequently gave this Teſtimony of his Love to his Diſciples, reproved the ſmallneſs of their Faith, Pride and Ambition, and unbecomming Paſſi-

Mat. 8. 26. 18. 1. Luke 9. 55, 56.

ons,

ons, and the like Sins. Thus must we also act: Smooth Flattery is an Argument of Hatred, and neglecting Reproofs when necessary is a piece of negative Flattery; but a smart rebuke is oftentimes a great Argument of Love, *Levit.* 19. 17. When therefore we see our Brother erring from his way, we must seek by moderate Reproofs to stir up his dying Graces, and bring him back to his Duty. Here indeed much Christian Prudence and Discretion is necessary: We are too apt to aggravate the failings of others, and extenuate our own far greater offences. Therefore let us be more ready to behold our own stains, than the lesser spots of others, and first cover our own nakedness before we cast the Stones of Reproof at our Brother. Neither must we reprove upon bare Rumors and Suspi-

Bishop *Hopkins* Serm. on *Lev.* 19. 17.

Suspicions, without certain knowledge of our Brothers offence: This is to shoot the Arrow before we see the mark. If we are not certainly assur'd either from our own personal Knowledge, or the undoubted Testimony of credible Witnesses, that our Brother is guilty, our reproofs will be but Slanders, and our Charity in offering the Cure will not be half so great as our uncharitableness in believing the Disease. Neither must we reprove sharply for small offences, for every unvoluntary slip and failing: To dip our Reproofs in Gall and Satyr upon every little miscarriage, is a piece of impertinent officiousness, and shews we are very much in Love with the Office. Further, our Reproofs must be seasonable, *Prov.* 15. 23. When our Brother is most calm and sedate, his Passions hush'd

hush'd and still, and his reason Re-seated on the Throne, as Water falling on a Red hot Iron only causes a great deal of noise and disturbance, so Reproofs just upon the very act of Sin, when our Brothers Passions are in disorder, will only cause him to fume and fret the more. Moreover our reproofs must be given in gentle Language, *Gal.* 6. 1. Rebukes in reviling words look like the upbraidings of an Enemy, and not like the kindness of a displeased Friend. Nay, let not your Reproofs be before others, lest it alienate thy Brothers Heart, and make him suspect 'tis hatred and not love that puts thee upon this ungrateful Imployment; but let them be between him and thee alone, with all the secresie and privacy possible: That he may see 'tis thy love that urgeth thee to this Office of Kindness; and good Men will

I hearken

hearken and endeavour to amend whatever is amiſs, *Pſal.* 141. 5. *Rebuke a Wiſe Man and he will love thee*, Prov. 9. 8.

8. In dying for one another. The greateſt Teſtimony of Chriſts Love was his dying for us, *John* 15. 13. *Rom.* 5. 8. *Hereby perceive we the Love of God, in that he laid down his Life for us, and we ought to lay down our Lives for the Brethren*, 1 *John* 3. 16. If Chriſt who was ſo much exalted above us in Glory and Majeſty, did lay down his Life for us, much more ought we to dye for our Brethren, who are of the ſame mould by Nature, partakers of the ſame precious Faith by Grace, and heirs of the ſame Inheritance in Glory. If Chriſt dyed for Enemies and Strangers, Slaves to Satan, and Rebels againſt Heaven, ſurely we ought not to account it hard to dye for Friends link'd to us by the neareſt

Bonds

Bonds of Union, Members of the ſame Body, and belonging to the ſame Glorious Head; ſeeing Chriſt did not account his Life too dear for us, we ought not to account this command an hard ſaying, or burden too difficult to be born.

But this Duty is only to be perform'd when we are ſpecially call'd to it, and the publick good of Chriſtianity requires it; to lay down our Lives without ſuch a Call is to become Murderers of our ſelves, and may be to the wrong, and not the benefit of our Brethren: For thereby we are incapacitated from doing them any further ſervice in this World. The great inſtance wherein we are to lay down our Lives for our Brethren is, when we are call'd to ſeal the Truth with our Blood. The Glory of God and Spiritual Good of our Brethren ought to be ſo dear to us, that we ought willingly to

Sacrifice our Lives, rather than by any base and sinful compliances harden Unbelievers, unsettle weak and wavering Christians, or grieve the Hearts of confirm'd Saints.

3. Some Practical Improvement.

I shall conclude all with a word of Exhortation.

1. To my Brethren in the Ministry. I have taken upon me the Office of putting you in remembrance of your Duty.

We all call our selves the Messengers of Peace, and Ambassadors of the God of Love, and are now come together to testifie our Love to one another. Let us now therefore take up an unanimous Resolution, that we will live together as united Brethren, and imitate the great Example of our Lord Redeemer, who hath given us our Commission. Let us not be strange or shy, or suspicious one of another; harbour any envy, ill-will or hard thoughts.

thoughts; Take up any evil reports, or hearken to the Tales of Whisperers and Backbiters, who make it their Business to sow Seeds of Discord among Brethren: While we all profess the same Holy Religion, worship God after the same manner, and pursue the same design of winning Souls to Christ; why should we be angry or displeas'd, if perhaps we have not the same Sentiments in some lesser Matters of difficulty; any more than because we are not of the same Age, Stature or Complexion? Why should we envy one anothers Parts, or Gifts, or Success; Or be offended because perhaps the Assemblies of others may be larger than our own? It ought to be our Joy if our Lord and Masters Work be carried on by others better than by our selves; and we ought to embrace our Brethren for their Piety, Warmth and Zeal, and be

highly pleas'd that God makes them Glorious Inſtruments for the Converſion of Souls.

The Apoſtle *Paul* could ſay that though ſome preached Chriſt out of envy and ſtriſe, *Phil.* 1. 15, 18. yet Chriſt was preached, and therein he did rejoice; yea, and would rejoice: We all preach Chriſt, and I am perſwaded none of us with contentious Spirits: Let us therefore rejoice in one anothers ſucceſs in the Work of the Miniſtry; and make it our buſineſs to ſtrengthen one anothers Hands in the ſervice of our Lord: Let not our Love be Complemental and Ceremonious, but let it be real and hearty, as becomes the Miniſters of Chriſt: Let it be expreſs'd in all the inſtances forementioned, by the Intimacies of our Friendſhip, by our earneſt and hearty Prayers; by a readineſs to forbear and forgive one another

by

by our kind Counsels and Admonitions, communicating to each other that Light and Knowledge we think we may have gain'd in the Mysteries of Religion, by our friendly and gentle Reproofs one of another, if there be occasion; by our hearty faithfulness in informing each other of our faults, and directing how we may best discharge the Work of the Ministry committed to us. These, my Brethren, are the great Duties God expects from us; and the obligations of Christianity forcibly engage us to the performance of them. As we have therefore begun to do thus, let us hold on, that our Union together may be for the advancement of the Kingdom of Christ, and enlargement of the Gospel, and an earnest and happy presage of a yet larger and more extensive Union among all the Faithful Ministers of Christ through-

out the Land, and (if it be God's will) throughout the whole Christian World.

2. To the people, and indeed to us all in general. Let us all be perſwaded to the practice of this Duty. The Plague of Uncharitableneſs hath dangerouſly Infected the generality of Chriſtians, and therefore it concerns every Meſſenger of peace to cry aloud and perſwade Men to Love and Union. This was the dying command of our Lord and Saviour, and ſhall we neglect it? How can we expect the Legacies and Benefits he hath bequeath'd, if we omit the commands he hath given? That muſt be a very unnatural Son that deſpiſes the laſt words and commands of his Father pronounced with his dying Breath; and are not we very unnatural if we neglect

last the dying Admonitions of our Dear Redeemer? When Men are just departing out of the World, and (especially good Men) they use not to spend their Breath about Trifles, but speak what they apprehend of greatest moment, and what they desire may be more especially regarded. Our Lord Jesus did not trifle with us when he was leaving the World: And therefore seeing this was one of his last Commands, we may be assur'd he laid great weight upon it, and earnestly desired it might be principally observed by his Followers. Nay, he himself makes it the distinguishing Character of his Disciples whereby they may be known from all the rest of the World. *By this shall all Men know that ye are my Disciples if ye have love one to another*, John 13. 35. Do you therefore shew your

your reſpect to your Dying Lord, and make it appear to the World that you are his true Diſciples by a conſtant unintermitted Exerciſe of Love to one another.

FINIS.

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